

Famous African Americans

Muhammad Ali

(1942-)

Boxer

Cassius Clay converted to Islam in 1963 and changed his name to Muhammad Ali. He won the heavyweight championship in 1964. Because he refused to serve in the Vietnam War, he was stripped of his title and banned from boxing in the United States. In 1970, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Ali's conviction on the grounds that he was a conscientious objector. Ali went on to win the heavyweight title three times.

Debbie Allen

(1950-)

Choreographer and Dancer

After graduating Howard University cum laude, Allen took to the Broadway stage and starred in the Grammy and Tony award winning musical *Raisin*. In 1982, Allen's career led her to film and television. The television series *Fame* moved Allen towards choreographing and later directing.

Marion Anderson

(1902-1993)

Singer

At the height of her career, Anderson was considered the world's greatest contralto. At the age of 23, she appeared as a soloist at the New York Philharmonic. The Daughters of the American Revolution did not allow her to sing at Constitution Hall. After this incident she gave her most memorable performance on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. In 1958, she became a Delegate to the United Nations.

Maya Angelou

(1928-)

Poet and Novelist

The ultimate recognition of Angelou's talent came when she composed and recited a poem for Bill Clinton's swearing in ceremony in 1993. She reached national celebrity status with her autobiography, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Angelou was the first African American woman to produce a movie. Angelou is also known for acting, directing, and narrating. She is a recipient of many awards.

Arthur Ashe

(1943-1993)

Tennis Player

In 1975, after winning the Wimbledon title, he was known as the world's greatest tennis player. Ashe was the first African American to be named to a Davis Cup Team. He represented the United States ten times and was its captain from 1981-1984.

Crispus Attucks

(1723-1770)

Revolutionary

Attucks is believed to have led a group that converged on a British garrison. He was one of the first casualties of the Boston Massacre, which led to the American Revolution.

Benjamin Banneker

(1731-1806)

Scientist and Astronomer

Banneker was one of America's first and finest scientists. He invented the wooden clock and the almanac. He also served as a surveyor on a team that helped lay out the base lines and initial boundaries for Washington, D.C. When the chairman of the committee resigned and returned to France with his plans, Banneker was able to reproduce the plans in their entirety.

Angela Bassett

(1958-)

Actress

Bassett starred in Broadway productions such as *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* and *Come and Gone*. Her works in film include *Malcolm X*, *How Stella Got Her Groove Back*, *Hamlet*, *Music of the Heart*, and *The Score*.

Romare Bearden

(1914-1988)

Painter and Collagist

Bearden's work reflected the era of industrialization. His work reflected city life, jazz and city people. In the 60's, he began to make collages and soon became one of the best-known collagists in the world. His notable works include *He Is Arisen*, *Sheba*, and *Street Corner*.

Tyson Beckford

(1971-)

Model

Beckford grew up in New York and Jamaica. 1991, he became a model with *The Source* magazine. By 1995, he was on the cover of many magazines, including *Vogue*, *GQ*, and *Essence*. That same year Beckford was named Model of the Year at the VH1 Fashion Awards.

Harry Belafonte

(1927-)

Actor and Singer

In 1960, Belafonte became the first African American to win an Emmy Award. Belafonte is not only known as an actor but as an activist and singer. In 1985, he received a Grammy Award for his organization of *We Are the World*. The video helped to raise funds for the Africa famine relief. Other notable mentions include, Ambassador to the United Nation Children's Fund in 1987, and National Medal of Arts in 1994.

Col. Guion S. Bluford, Jr., Ph.D.

(1942-)

Astronaut

Bluford was the first African American in space. He is a retired Colonel in the U.S. Air Force and is currently the Vice President and General Manager of Engineering Services Division, NYMA Inc.

Ed Bradley

(1941-)

Television News Correspondent

Bradley served as White House correspondent for CBS and as anchor for *CBS Nightly News* and *60 Minutes*. He has won many awards for his work, including seven Emmy Awards.

Cab Calloway

(1907-1994)

Singer and Bandleader

Calloway was known as a singer and enthusiastic bandleader. In 1928 Calloway starred in the Broadway musical *Connie's Hot Chocolates*. In 1943, Calloway starred with Lena Horne in *Stormy Weather*. His other notable works include *Hello Dolly*, *St. Louis Blues*, and *The Blues Brothers*. Calloway was known as the "King of Hi De Ho."

Elmer Simms Campbell

(1906-1971)

Cartoonist

Campbell was the first African American cartoonist to work for national publications. He contributed cartoons and other art to *Esquire*, *Redbook*, *Cosmopolitan*, and the *New Yorker* magazines. His work was also featured in 145 newspapers.

Naomi Campbell

(1970-)

Super Model

Campbell was discovered at the age of 15 and has appeared on many magazine covers including *Time* magazine, and *Vogue*. She is an actress and partial owner of the only fashion food chain, Fashion Café. Campbell is considered to be one of just a few African American super models.

Diahann Carroll

(1935-)

Actress

In 1968, Carroll broke stereotypes by being the first African American female to be portrayed with a dignified occupation in the sitcom *Julia*. In 1998, Carroll became the spokesperson for the National Women's Cancer Research Alliance. Her notable works are *Claudine*, *Sunset Boulevard*, and *Carmen Jones*.

George Washington Carver

(1860-1943)

Scientist

Carver is one the best known agricultural scientists of his generation. He is known for individually inventing over 400 products from the peanut and the sweet potato. Some of these products are peanut butter, shampoo, coffee, and face powder.

Wilt Chamberlain

(1936-1999)

Basketball Player

Chamberlain attended Kansas University, where he received two years of All American honors. Before joining the NBA, he played with the Harlem Globetrotters. Chamberlain holds the most major records for a single game, including most points (100); field goals made (36); free throws (28); and rebounds (55).

Ray Charles

(1930-)

Singer and Composer

In 1953, Charles sold a million copies of *The Things I Used To Do*. The next major hit came in 1959 with *What I'd Say*. Today Ray Charles performs at several events across the country, including patriotic and political ones.

Charles Waddell Chestnutt

(1858-1932)

Writer

Chestnutt is highly recognized as one of the first major African American writers of fiction. In the same year that Chestnutt was admitted to the American Bar Association, his first story *The Gopher Grapevine* was published. His other notable works include *The Conjour Woman*, *The House Behind Cedars* and *The Colonel's Dream*.

Eldridge Cleaver

(1935-1998)

Activist and Author

Cleaver was a top official in the Black Panthers organization. He became best known for his book *Soul On Ice*. Later, Cleaver converted to Christianity and denounced racism.

Bill Cosby

(1937-)

Comedian and Actor

In 1965 Cosby became the first African American to star on a prime time television show *I Spy*. He won three Emmy Awards for this show. Some of Cosby's works include *Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids*, *To All My Friends on Shore*, and *The Cosby Show*.

Countee Cullen

(1903-1946)

Poet

Cullen was one of the major contributors to the Harlem Renaissance with his volume of poems entitled *Color*. Other notable works include *Copper Sun*, *The Ballad of the Brown Girl*, and his novel *One Way to Heaven*.

Miles Davis

(1928-1964)

Musician

In 1949, Davis formed a nine-piece band with Lee Konitz and John Lewis. This group had a great impact on jazz, and they have been deemed the forefathers that helped define “cool jazz”. His notable albums include *Porgy and Bess*, *Sketches of Spain*, and *Miles Ahead*.

Aaron Douglas

(1899-1988)

Muralist And Illustrator

Douglas is considered the most important painter of the Harlem Renaissance. His notable works include, murals at Fisk and in the Countee Cullen branch of the New York City Public Library; and illustrations in books by James W. Johnson, Langston Hughes, and Alain Locke.

Fredrick Douglass

(1818-1895)

Writer and Abolitionist

Douglas was the foremost African American abolitionist and the first African American leader of national stature in the history of the United States. He devoted his life to the abolition of slavery and the rights of African Americans. He won world fame when his autobiography was published in 1845, *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass*. In 1847, Douglass began publishing an antislavery paper called the *North Star*. His home in Washington, D.C. is now owned by the National Park Service and is open to the public.

W.E.B. DuBois

(1868-1963)

Writer and Co-Founder of the NAACP

DuBois was the first African American to graduate from Harvard. He helped form the Niagra Movement, which grew into the NAACP. He wrote *Black Reconstruction*, *The Souls of Black Folks*, and *The World and Africa*.

Paul Lawrence Dunbar

(1872-1906)

Poet

Dunbar was the first African American poet to gain national recognition. His trademark was the use of black dialect in poems such as *Li'l Gal* and *Howdy Honey Howdy*.

Medgar Evers

(1925-1963)

Civil Rights Activist

In 1954 Evers was appointed Mississippi's first field secretary. He fought unceasingly against discrimination of African Americans. In 1963, he was shot in the back. His death prompted the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which was signed by President Lyndon Johnson.

Louis Farrakhan

(1933-)

Activist

Farrakhan is the controversial leader of the Nation of Islam. He organized the Million Man March on Washington, D.C. in 1995.

Aretha Franklin

(1942-)

Singer

Aretha Franklin earned the title "Queen of Soul" with her 15 Grammy Awards. In 1995, Franklin was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Kirk Franklin

(1971-)

Gospel Director and Producer

By the age of nineteen, Franklin was recording music that would eventually lead to his first double platinum album. Kirk Franklin won many awards including a Grammy Award, a NAACP Image Award. In 1997, Billboard magazine rated Franklin #1 Gospel Artist and #1 Contemporary Christian Artist.

Redd Foxx

(1922-1991)

Comedian and Actor

Foxx starred in the television series *Sanford and Son*. With that role, he became one of the highest paid actors of his time. In the 1950's, Foxx found work in Hollywood. In 1973, the NAACP named Foxx Entertainer of the Year.

Althea Gibson

(1927-)

Tennis Player

Gibson won the National Negro Singles championship in 1945 and 1946. In 1951, she became the first African American to play in Wimbledon. She won the Wimbledon singles title in 1957 and the U.S. Open Women's Single title in 1957 and 1958.

Dizzy Gillespie

(1917-1993)

Musician

Gillespie became one of the leading trumpet players of all time. His notable albums are *Groovin' High*, *A Night in Tunisia*, and *Carnegie Hall Concert Live*.

Florence Griffith-Joyner

(1959-1998)

Track and Field Athlete

Joyner won a silver medal in the 1984 Olympic games, and returned to the 1988 Olympic games winning a gold medal in the 100-meter, 200-meter, 400-meter relay, and 1600-meter relay races. She died of an apparent heart seizure at the age of 38.

Bryant Gumbel

(1948-)

Television Anchor

Gumbel is well known as a co-anchor of the *Today* show. He also hosts pre-game programming during coverage of the National Football League, Major League Baseball, and other sports.

Alex Haley

(1921-1992)

Journalist and Novelist

Haley's first book *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* sold six million copies and was translated into eight languages. He is also well known for the novel *Roots*. He received many awards for this book including a Pulitzer Prize. ABC produced a twelve-hour movie series based on the book. The United States Senate passed a resolution paying tribute to Haley.

Gregory Hines

(1946-)

Dancer and Choreographer

In 1978, Hines went solo to Broadway. He appeared in plays such as *Sophisticated Ladies*, and in the film *The Cotton Club*. Hines has received many awards for his talents including, the Dance Educators Award and Theatre World Award.

Billie Holiday

(1915-1959)

Singer

Billie Holiday called "Lady Day" is known as one of the greatest jazz singers of all time. Her notable works include *Strange Fruit* and *God Bless the Child*. The movie *Lady Sings the Blues* tells her life story starring Diana Ross and Billy Dee Williams.

Whitney Houston

(1963-)

Singer and Actress

Throughout her career she sang back up for stars like Chaka Khan and Dionne Warwick. In 1985, Houston came out with her debut album, *Whitney Houston*. In 1994, Houston broke the record of having the most time spent at the top of the Billboard charts with her remake of *I Will Always Love You* from the movie, *The Bodyguard* in which she made her acting debut. She has received many awards including Grammys, NAACP Image Awards, and Soul Train's Entertainer of the Year.

Langston Hughes

(1902-1967)

Poet, Novelist and Playwright

Hughes was a prolific writer. Known for portraying racial issues with a touch of humor, Hughes captured the frustrations felt by African Americans. His works include *Not Without Laughter*, *The Weary Blues*, *One-Way Ticket*, and numerous plays including, *Mulatto* and *Tambourines to Glory*. His poem entitled *Dream Deferred* is well known and carries a strong message of resistance to injustice.

Zora Neale Hurston

(1891-1960)

Novelist

Hurston served on the editorial board of the magazine *Fire* with Langston Hughes and Wallace Thurmon during the Harlem Renaissance. She is best known for her novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Her other notable works are *Man of the Mountain*; *Mules and Men*; and *Tell My Horse*.

Iman

(1955-)

Super Model

Iman is known as one of the first African American women to break into the super-modeling world.

Jesse Jackson

(1941-)

Civil Rights Leader

Jackson is a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom. He is a prominent civil rights leader allying himself with organizations such as, Operation PUSH, and The Rainbow Coalition.

Jessie L. Jackson, Jr.

(1965-)

Congressman, from Illinois

Jesse Jackson, Jr. was elected to Congress in 1995. He serves on the Appropriations Committee and as the Co-Chair of the Communications Group for the House of Representatives Democratic Policy Committee.

Mahalia Jackson

(1911-1972)

Gospel Singer

Jackson is credited for bringing gospel music to mainstream America. Her style reflects that of revival singing. Jackson performed at civil rights functions and Carnegie Hall in New York City.

Michael Jackson

(1958-)

Singer and Entertainer

Michael Jackson started singing as a child with the sibling band The Jackson Five. In the 1980's Jackson went solo and earned the title "The King of Pop". Jackson's *Thriller* album made history by being the biggest selling album of all time.

Mae C. Jemison, M.D.

(1956-)

Astronaut

Jemison was the first African American woman to be admitted into the astronaut-training program. She was the first African American woman to fly a mission into space.

Jack Johnson

(1876-1946)

Boxer

Johnson became the first black heavyweight champion, after winning the crown from Tommy Burns in Australia.

Quincy Jones

(193-)

Musician, Arranger and Producer

Jones has won several Grammy awards. He has written more than 50 music scores for movies such as *The Color Purple*, *Roots*, and *In the Heat of the Night*. Jones was the first African American executive at a major record company (Mercury Records).

Michael Jordan

(1963-)

Basketball Star

Jordan was the second NBA player in history to score more than 3,000 points in a single season and he was the NBA's individual scoring champ from 1987 through 1993. His skills and leadership led the Chicago Bulls to an unprecedented six world championships. Jordan is considered by many to be the greatest basketball player in history. He is currently playing with the Washington Wizards.

Marion Jones

(1975-)

Track and Field Athlete

Jones won three gold and two bronze medals in the 2000 Olympics in track and field.

Jackie Joyner-Kersey

(1962-)

Track and Field Athlete

Joyner-Kersey is considered to be the world's greatest female athlete. She is the only woman to gain more than 7,000 points in the heptathlon four times. Joyner-Kersey won several gold and bronze medals at the Olympics.

B.B. King

(1925-)

Musician

For more than 50 years B.B. King earned the reputation as a class blues man. His first single came in 1951, *3 O'clock Blues*. It held the number 1 position on the Billboard charts for several weeks. His notable works are *Completely Well* featuring the hit "The Thrill is Gone", *Confessin' the Blues*, and *Live and Well*.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

(1929-1968)

Civil Rights Leader

King, Jr. was one of the most influential leaders in modern civil rights history. He committed his life to non-violent activism and brought the civil rights movement to the forefront of American. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. King, Jr. was assassinated in 1968.

Spike Lee

(1957-)

Producer

In 1986, Lee produced the film *She's Gotta Have It*. This film won both the Prix de Jeunesse Award at the Cannes Film Festival and the Los Angeles Film Critics New Generation Award. This set him at the forefront of African American cinema. Through his films and production company (Forty Acres and a Mule), he has helped to launch the careers of several young African American actors. Some of his works are *School Daze*, *Do The Right Thing*, *Malcolm X*, *Crooklyn*, *Mo' Better Blues*, and *Jungle Fever*. He has also produced several music videos, commercials, and short films.

Sugar Ray Leonard

(1956-)

Boxer

Leonard won a gold medal in the 1976 Olympic games and his first title bout as a welterweight over Wilfred Benitez in November 1979. He was the first boxer to win titles in the welterweight, junior middleweight, middleweight, and super middleweight, and light heavyweight divisions.

Carl Lewis

(1961-)

Track and Field Athlete

In the 1984 Olympics, Lewis became the first athlete to win four gold medals since Jesse Owens. He won two gold medals and a silver medal in 1988, and a gold medal in the 1992 Olympic games.

Edmondia Lewis

(1845-1890)

Sculptor

Lewis was the first African American woman to be recognized as a sculptor in America. Her notable works include *Hagar in the Wilderness*, *Forever Free*, and *Hiawatha*.

Joe Lewis

(1914-1981)

Boxer

Lewis was known as “The Brown Bomber”. He held the heavyweight championship title for 11 years, longer than anyone else. He defended the title more often than any other heavyweight champion.

John Lewis

(1940-)

Congressman from Georgia, Civil Rights Activist

Before entering politics, Lewis was involved in numerous social activist organizations including the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee. Lewis was an organizer and participant in many sit-ins, freedom rides, and protest marches throughout the South and is the recipient of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Non-Violent Peace Prize.

Wynton Marsalis

(1961-)

Jazz Musician

From 1980 to 1999, Marsalis produced over 40 albums. He is the recipient of several awards including nine Grammy Awards and a Pulitzer Prize for Music. His notable albums are *Hot House Flowers*, *Standard Time*, *Volume I*, and *Listen to the Storyteller*.

Thurgood Marshall

(1908-1993)

Supreme Court Justice

Marshall was the first African American to be appointed Supreme Court Justice, and the second African American to serve on the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. During his tenure on the Court, he supported desegregation, affirmative action, freedom of speech, and the rights of workers.

Elijah McCoy

(1843-1929)

Inventor

McCoy designed over 42 inventions that modernized machinery all over the world. His first invention was the lubricator cup. Because he was a perfectionist, people trusted him and when copies of his inventions were offered to prospective buyers, they would say, “I want the real McCoy.”

Terry McMillian

(1951-)

Novelist

McMillan published her first short story at the age of 25. Her novels are *Mama*, *Disappearing Acts*, and *Waiting to Exhale*. *Waiting to Exhale* was later made into a movie and later became a box office hit.

Toni Morrison

(1931-)

Writer

Morrison's novel *Beloved* was published in 1987, and is regarded as her most significant work. This historical novel won Morrison the Pulitzer Prize. Morrison was a senior editor at Random House in New York City where she was responsible for many books by African American authors. Morrison made history when she became the first African American recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993.

Eddie Murphy

(1961-)

Actor and Comedian

In 1982, Eddie Murphy created characters that made history on the long running television show *Saturday Night Live*. That same year, Murphy made his film debut by starring opposite Nick Nolte in *48 Hours*. His notable works include *Beverly Hills Cop*, *Coming to America*, *The Nutty Professor*, and *Shrek*.

Willie O'Ree

(1935-)

Hockey Player

O'Ree made his debut in the National Hockey League in 1958, becoming the first African American to break the racial stereotype in professional hockey.

Jesse Owens

(1913-1980)

Track and Field Athlete

Owens is considered a great athlete with the combined talents of a sprinter, low hurdler, and broad jumper. He was well known for winning four gold medals at the 1936 Olympics, which was at the time the most universally acclaimed feat in the history of the games.

Rosa Parks

(1913-)

Civil Rights Activist

Parks was well known for igniting the Montgomery, Alabama Boycott led by Martin Luther King, Jr.

Walter Payton

(1954-)

Football Player

Payton holds the National Football League's all-time rushing record.

Calvin Peete

(1943-)

Golfer

Peete is considered one of the most accomplished African American golfers in history. He captured several PGA titles including the Anheuser-Busch Classic

Sidney Poitier

(1924-)

Actor

Poitier's acting career took off and blazed the way for African American actors after he starred in *No Way Out*. In 1965 Poitier was the first African American to win an Oscar for the movie *Lilies of the Field*. Some of his other works are *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*. Other notable works include: *Buck and the Preacher*, *Stir Crazy*, *To Sir with Love* and *Little Nikita*.

Colin Powell

(1937-)

Secretary of State

Powell became the first African American to serve as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Secretary of State.

Richard Pryor

(1940-)

Comedian and Actor

Pryor's career as a comedian began in the 1960's. In 1964, he appeared on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. Pryor has received Emmy Awards and Grammy Awards for his works.

Condoleezza Rice

(1954-)

Presidential Adviser

Rice is the first woman to hold the position of national security adviser and works in the Bush cabinet alongside the Vice President, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of Defense.

Jerry Rice

(1962-)

Football Player

Rice has set NFL records in reception touchdowns and yardage and has played in four Superbowls.

Max Robinson

(1939-1988)

News Correspondent

Robinson joined *ABC World News Tonight* in 1978, becoming the first African American network anchor. He received several awards, including three Emmy Awards.

Jackie Robinson

(1919-1972)

Baseball Player

Robinson was considered the first African American to break the racial barrier in modern professional baseball.

Diana Ross

(1944-)

Singer and Actress

Diana Ross started her career with the musical group *The Supremes* in 1961. She launched her career as a soloist in 1970. She went on to win an Oscar Award for her portrayal of Billie Holiday in *Lady Sings the Blues*.

Wilma Rudolph

(1940-1994)

Track and Field Athlete

Wilma Rudolph was the first woman to win three gold medals in the Olympic games. She earned the title “World’s Fastest Woman” by winning the 100-meter dash and the 200-meter dash in the 1960 Olympic games.

John Russwurm

(1799-1851)

Journalist

Russwurm founded the first African American newspaper in 1827, *The Freedom Journal*.

Agusta Savage

(1900-1962)

Sculptor

Savage emerged during the Harlem Renaissance. She was represented in the first all black exhibit in America. She was also the first African American to win acceptance in the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors. Her notable works are, *Lift Every Voice and Sing*; *Gamin*; *Black Women*; *Marcus Garvey*; and *W.E.B. DuBois*.

Bernard Shaw

(1940-)

Television Anchor

Shaw is the Washington anchor for CNN. He reported some of the most significant events in international news.

Willi Smith

(1948-1987)

Fashion Designer

Smith is known for his fun, cross seasonal, and affordable designer wear, Smith innovated in mixing and matching plaids, stripes and vivid colors. In 1983 he received Coty American Fashion Critics Award.

Vertner W Tandy, Sr.

(1885-1949)

Architect

Tandy was the first African American architect registered in the state of New York. He designed the mansion for Madame C.J. Walker. Tandy is also known for founding the African American fraternity, Alpha Phi Alpha.

Harry Ossowa Tanner

(1859-1937)

Portrait Painter

Tanner was said to be the most promising African American artist of his day. He was the first African American elected to a full membership in the National Academy of Design. His notable works are *Flight into Egypt*, *The Annunciation*, *Thankful Poor*, and *The Sabot Makers*.

Mary Church Terrell

(1863-1954)

Women's Rights Advocate and Co-Founder of the NAACP

Terrell founded the Women Wage Earners Association and was co-founder of the NAACP.

Debbie Thomas

(1967-)

Figure Skater

Thomas became the first African American to capture the U.S. and World figure skating titles in an international singles meet. She captured the bronze medal in the 1988 Games.

Jean Toomer

(1894-1967)

Novelist and Poet

Toomer was one of the major writers to emerge during the Harlem Renaissance. His writing was considered to be ahead of its time. Toomer's novel *Cane* is now considered one of the three best novels written by an African American at the time.

Sojourner Truth

(1797-1883)

Public Speaker and Abolitionist

Truth traveled the country speaking against slavery and for women's rights.

Ben Augustus Vereen

(1946-)

Dancer and Actor

Vereen is known as America's premier song and dance man. HE debuted on stage in *The Prodigal Son*. In 1972, Vereen won a Tony Award for the Broadway hit *Pippin*. He appeared in the films, *All That Jazz* and *The Zoo Gang*

Alice Walker

(1944-)

Author

Walker has written several books. Her most popular work was the novel *The Color Purple*. She won the Pulitzer Prize for it in 1983, as well as an American Book Award. *The Color Purple* was adapted into an award winning film. Walker has continued writing novels. Her works include *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, *The Same River Twice*, and *Honoring the Difficult*.

Moses Fleetwood Walker

(1856-1924)

Baseball Player

Walker became the first African American in the major leagues in 1884.

Booker T. Washington

(1856-1915)

Educator and Writer

Washington was the founder and later president of Tuskegee University. He also wrote several books including *The Future of The Negro* and *Up From Slavery*.

Denzel Washington

(1954-)

Actor and Spokesperson

Washington earned an Oscar nomination for his role in *Cry Freedom* in 1987. He won the Best Supporting Actor award in 1989, for his role in *Glory*. His notable works include *Malcolm X*, *Philadelphia*, *Crimson Tide*, and *The Hurricane*.

Edward T. Wellburn

(1950-)

Automobile Designer

Wellburn is chief designer of automobiles at the Oldsmobile Studio for General Motors. He designed the Cutlass Supreme, Cutlass Ciera, and the Oldsmobile Calais.

Ida B. Wells-Barnett

(1862-1931)

Journalist and Co-Founder of the NAACP

Ida B. Wells dedicated her life to a successful anti-lynching campaign. She also organized women's clubs and political meetings. Wells was one of the founders of the NAACP.

Dr. Daniel Hale Williams

(1848-1928)

Surgeon

Dr. Williams completed the first successful operation to repair a torn human heart.

Vanessa Williams

(1963-)

Singer and Actress

Williams made history in 1983, when she became the first African American to be crowned Miss America. She was later dethroned. She improved her celebrity status through acting, singing, and participation in charitable events.

Stevie Wonder

(1950-)

Singer and Song Writer

Wonder is considered a musical genius. His notable works include *Fingertips*, *Signed Sealed & Delivered*, *Songs in the Key of Life*, *Music From My Mind*, *Square Circle* and *Conversation Piece*. Wonder has received a total of 15 Grammy Awards and works with greats like Spike Lee and Quincy Jones.

Tiger Woods

(1975-)

Golfer

Woods at the age of 21 became the youngest player to win the Masters and the first of African or Asian descent to win a major golf championship. He is the first player in history to sweep all four major tournaments in a row, solidifying his status in history as the best golfer in the world.

Carter G. Woodson

(1875-1950)

Historian

Woodson is called the father of African American History. He began the African American Historical Association and Negro History week, which has grown into African American History Month.

Malcolm X

(1925-1965)

Nationalist

Malcolm X was considered one of the most controversial figures of the twentieth century. He advocated self-pride, self-reliance and separation of the races. As a Nation of Islam minister, he was seen as an extremist and a racist. He later became disillusioned with the Nation of Islam and left. He was forming a human rights group that supported unity among the races when he was assassinated.

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